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## PSYCHOLOGY TEACHER NETWORK

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## HOW DO COLLEGE FRESHMEN VIEW THE ACADEMIC DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE?

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Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis

**P**sychology teachers can serve an important role as mentors to their students in ways that can help students make a successful transition to college. By sharing information about the differences between high school and college experiences, teachers can help students understand they will be adjusting to many changes, particularly in terms of expectations.

### FOSTERING STUDENTS' ADAPTATION TO COLLEGE

To help my students adapt to their freshman year in college, I have used a three-stage strategy. The first stage is to bring students' attention to the ways in which their college classes and professors are going to be different from their high school classes and teachers. For example, the work in college is harder, there is more of it, it must be completed in a shorter

period of time, and most of it must be done outside the school environment. The second stage is to help them identify and value the knowledge, skills and attitudes (KSAs) they will need to adapt to their new academic environment. For example, they must have knowledge of the resources their college provides (e.g., the library, the writing center and academic advising), the skills their classes will require (e.g., the ability to follow instructions, think critically and manage time) and the attitudes required to be academically successful (e.g., the willingness to take responsibility for their own learning and to assume an active—rather than a passive—attitude toward their education). The third stage is to engage them in assignments and activities designed to develop or strengthen these KSAs.

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I identified these academic differences and the KSAs needed to adjust to them by combining the wisdom of experts in the field of the first-year experience with the experiences I have had with the thousands of freshmen I have taught during my 40-year career as a college professor. My strategy was reasonably successful, but it suffered from a reliance on the faulty assumption that younger people (i.e., college freshmen) would eagerly attend to, value, believe and act upon advice given to them by older people (i.e., college faculty). I am sure my students perceived me as a friendly, well-meaning person who sincerely desired to help them, but as I aged, my ability to act as a credible source of advice for college freshmen diminished. This article represents an honest attempt to create a source of advice for college freshmen that comes from a far more credible source than a person who is three times as old as they are. The source of this advice is students who, only one short year earlier, were college freshmen too.

My method to create this advice was simple. I asked the 24 students enrolled in my freshman learning community to tell me the differences they had experienced between (a) their high school classes and their college classes and (b) their high school teachers and their college professors. I then content-analyzed their responses and put the responses into categories that reflected basic differences between their academic experiences in high school and college. The remainder of this article presents a summary of the differences in these two crucial aspects of the academic environment (i.e., classes and teachers) supported by the actual voices of my students printed in italics.

### PERCEIVED DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL CLASSES AND COLLEGE CLASSES

My students identified several differences between high school classes and college classes, most of which dealt with the work assigned in classes. Students said that both the amount and difficulty of the work they were required to do in college classes had increased significantly from high school. One said, *You have to read everything in college, whereas in high school you barely had to read anything at all.* A second noted, *High school classes were really easy to pass, but college classes take a lot of work for you to succeed.* A third said, *College classes are really hard and much more in depth compared to high school classes.* Time was also a factor mentioned by many students, both in terms of the amount of time it took to complete assignments and the speed with which material must be learned. One student said, *We just don't have as much time to do assignments as we did in high school because a lot more material is covered in a much shorter amount of time.* A second said, *Even though you may not be in class as long as in high school, the amount of time you have to put in to complete the assigned work is doubled, even tripled.* Another aspect of the differences between the work done in high school versus college is where the work is done. One student provided insight into this difference by saying, *In high school, you learn the material in class. In college, most learning takes place outside the classroom.*

The most commonly cited difference between how learning takes place in high school versus college was that more responsibility is placed on students to learn on their own in college. This difference was clearly communicated by one student who said, *You did not have to do reading assignments in high school because your teacher taught you everything that was in your textbook that you had to know for tests. In college, if you do not do your homework, you have no crutch to lean on. You are much more on your own in college classes.* Another supported this opinion succinctly by saying, *In college, you need to learn how to learn on your own.*

*This article represents an honest attempt to create a source of advice for college freshmen that comes from a far more credible source than a person who is three times as old as they are. The source of this advice is students who, only one short year earlier, were college freshmen too.*

A final difference a few students noted between high school and college classes was classroom atmosphere. The following two quotations make it clear high school students should expect a difference in the way their classes will be run in college. *College classes are more laid back, longer and don't have as many rules. The biggest difference is that they don't make you stand if you're late, there are no assigned seats and you don't need passes to leave.* (Please note these comments refer to rules for classroom behaviors, not academic rules such as deadlines for papers and tests, which tend to be stricter in college as we will learn later.)

### PERCEIVED DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS AND COLLEGE PROFESSORS

My students also identified several differences between high school teachers and college professors, the most important of which centered on the fact that college professors expect their students to be more responsible partners in the teaching-learning process. Several students' responses focused on the syllabus college professors use to communicate the structure, procedures and requirements of their classes to students. One student commented about this by saying, *High school teachers tell students what's due the next day, whereas college professors expect students to read for themselves in the syllabus what's due.* This idea was reinforced by another student who said, *College teachers don't tell you what you're supposed to do. They just expect you to do it. High school teachers tell you about five times what you are supposed to do.* The following poignant comment from another student communicates the feeling of frustration and helplessness a freshman who has not yet fully adapted to this greater level of responsibility can experience. *College teachers expect their students*



*to read the syllabus, and the classroom is set up to where it is sink or swim. Do the work or fail. High school teachers reminded us about the deadlines for our projects every day and tried to help us if we were struggling. It's really cool that college teachers treat us like adults, but the down side of this is that we have to act like adults too!*

A second aspect of increased student responsibility for learning in college emerged in comments about the difference between what is taught by high school teachers versus college professors. One student explained this difference by saying, *High school teachers teach you what's in your textbooks. College teachers expect you to actually read your textbooks.* A second student highlighted this from a more personal perspective with the following comment: *High school teachers assist you more. They kind of hold your hand through things.* A third student's comment summarized the concept of increased student responsibility quite succinctly, *College knowledge is self-taught.* A final comment lends a cultural perspective to the different atmosphere of academic responsibility in high school versus college and the differential way students value this responsibility. *In high school, you were a dork if you got good grades and cared about what was going on in your classes. In college, you're a dork if you don't.*

Another responsibility-related difference students reported between high school teachers and college professors was adherence to rules. One student noted that, *College teachers expect much more from you. There are no late assignments or make-up tests. They do not hold your hand anymore.* The following comment helped explain the potentially negative results of this difference for college students who are accustomed to their old high school ways. *The biggest difference between the two was that in high school, I could usually get an assignment done whenever I could, and there wouldn't be much of a consequence if it was late.*

*In high school, you were a dork if you got good grades and cared about what was going on in your classes. In college, you're a dork if you don't.*

A final difference my students perceived between high school teachers and college professors dealt with student-teacher relationships. One student said, *College professors aren't as available as high school teachers. I could drop into my high school teachers' offices anytime and just hang out. College professors have office hours we have to use if we want to discuss things with them.* A second student commented, *In high school, teachers were supposed to learn our names and get to know us. In college, I have learned it is my responsibility to help my teachers to get to know me.*

## **ADVICE THAT CAN HELP HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS BECOME AWARE OF THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE AND SUCCESSFULLY ADAPT TO THESE DIFFERENCES**

The advice in the following paragraphs should help incoming college students who would like to know how their academic experience in college will differ from that in high school. Taking this advice seriously and using it to modify their academic behaviors and attitudes can prevent students from blundering into their freshman year in college and expecting it to be their 13th grade in high school. I truly believe the transition from high school to college can be as serious as the culture shock experienced by travelers who are not properly instructed about the customs of the countries they visit. Imagine arriving in England and renting a car if no one had told you that the English drive on the left side of the road. You might survive your first encounter with an English driver but, then again, you might not.

**Before you begin your freshman year in college, prepare yourself to be challenged by harder work, more work and work that must be completed in a shorter period of time. You should begin to change your educational work ethic because you will be doing most of your work outside of the classroom, and you will be expected to learn the majority of your assigned material on your own, rather than relying on your teachers to teach it to you. You should also begin preparing yourself to learn in a less-structured classroom atmosphere in which your teachers will no longer remind you about what you are supposed to do, will hold you responsible for completing your assignments in the correct and timely manner described in the course syllabus they give you on the first day of class and will be less likely to bend the rules or allow you to earn credit if your work is late or if you perform poorly. You may also discover that college professors are less available than high school teachers and that some prefer to maintain a somewhat more formal relationship with their students than high school teachers.**

Time management is a tremendous problem for many freshmen. For most high school students—especially bright ones—the educational day ends when the school day ends because they were able to learn all they need to know while they were in school. Learning does not end when the class day ends in college. In fact, learning often begins when classes end because so much learning takes place outside the classroom. This abrupt change of events is particularly difficult for students who are accustomed to going to high school for 7 hours and then having the remaining 17 hours of the day to eat, sleep, relax, shop, play video games, watch television, listen to music and hang out with friends. One of the purposes of higher education is to prepare you to become a person who is capable of mastering large amounts of difficult material in a short period of time and performing this work in a responsible and independent manner without having to be reminded to do it. In other words, one of the

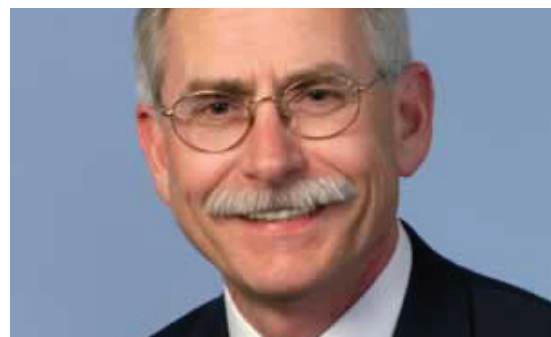
objectives of a college education is to transform adolescents into adults. The following comment from one of my former learning community students puts this objective into sharp perspective. “It’s time for me to step out of the purgatory between my teenage years and adulthood and take some responsibility for my life.”

## REFERENCE

Appleby, D. C. (2006, May). *How do college freshmen view the academic differences between high school and college?* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Midwestern Psychological Association, Chicago, IL.

## AUTHOR’S NOTE

If you would like to receive a PowerPoint created from this article that can be presented to college freshmen or high school seniors, please contact me at [dappleby@iupui.edu](mailto:dappleby@iupui.edu). PTN



**DREW C.  
APPLEBY, PHD**

Drew C. Appleby, PhD, received his BA from Simpson College in 1969 and his PhD from Iowa State University in 1972. During his 40-year career, he served as the chair of the Marian University Psychology Department, the director of Undergraduate Studies in the Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) Psychology Department, and the associate dean of the IUPUI Honors College. He was honored for his outstanding contributions to the science and profession of psychology by being named as a Fellow of the American Psychological Association’s Division 1 (General Psychology) and Division 2 (Society for the Teaching of Psychology), and the Midwestern Psychological Association and as the 30th distinguished member of Psi Chi. He has been recognized for his outstanding contributions to teaching, advising, mentoring and service.

# NEWS FROM TOPSS & PT@CC

## CHARLES BLAIR-BROEKER HONORED

Michael Hamilton  
Hopkinton High School, MA

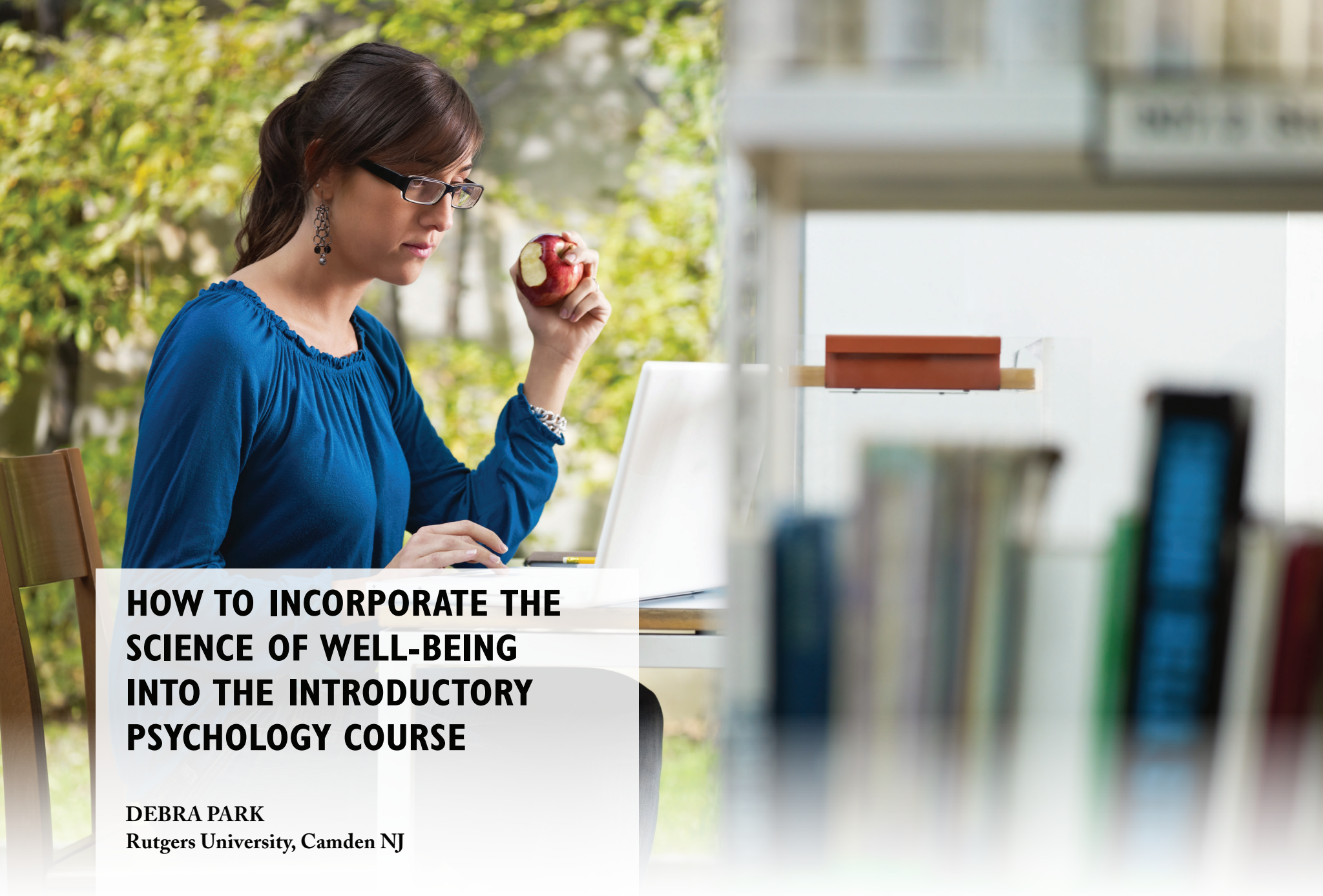
At the June 2014 AP Psychology Reading in Kansas City, TOPSS announced it would be renaming its teaching award. The award will now be called the APA TOPSS Charles T. Blair-Broeker Excellence in Teaching Award in honor of all Blair-Broeker has contributed to the teaching of high school psychology. Blair-Broeker retired in May from Cedar Falls High School in Cedar Falls, Iowa, after 39 years of teaching psychology. He played a key role in founding the TOPSS committee in 1992 and served as its first secretary-treasurer in 1992 and as chair in 1994. Blair-Broeker has performed countless duties on behalf of TOPSS and APA, and for that, we are deeply grateful. Charlie Blair-Broeker is a role model for us and a symbol of what it means to be a leader in education.



During the ceremony, Blair-Broeker was also awarded an APA Presidential Citation on behalf of 2014 APA President, Nadine Kaslow, PhD. The citation recognizes his exemplary efforts to promote high-quality instruction of, and professionalism in, teaching high school psychology. The world of high school psychology has been lucky to have such a wonderful and inspiring mentor.

**Congratulations and best wishes, Charlie.**





## HOW TO INCORPORATE THE SCIENCE OF WELL-BEING INTO THE INTRODUCTORY PSYCHOLOGY COURSE

DEBRA PARK  
Rutgers University, Camden NJ

Summer is over, the new school year is under way, and I am sure you are thinking of ways to make your classes more meaningful and enjoyable for your students. With the focus on standards and testing, it is more important than ever that we help our students develop essential habits and competencies to support their ongoing personal well-being. Good grades and high test scores are not accomplished by hours of study and preparation alone.

Helping students identify their strengths, talents and purposes during their adolescent development can affect their identity in a positive way and empower them in ways that will lead to a more successful transition from high school to college to adulthood. Skills that will help them enter the workforce and contribute to their society in a positive fashion are important and can be studied through themes related to personal well-being habits. Personal well-being habits and social-emotional learning skills can be the focus of psychology lessons but can also be integrated into other subjects. To teach these skills, seven research-based habits of well-being (i.e., relationships, caring, flow, health and wellness, positive mindset, meaning (or purpose), and strengths) can be integrated into units of study.

The science of subjective well-being (SWB) is an area growing in interest and relevance for educators at all grade levels. In the April 2014 issue of *Teaching of Psychology*, Diener and Scollon (2014) wrote about why teaching about SWB would be beneficial to college students, with excellent suggestions and sample syllabus topics. They reviewed some key findings on the benefits of SWB and provided a brief discussion on teaching tools and methods. All the suggestions in the article could be applied to a high school psychology course.

Martin Seligman, in “Flourish,” identified three good reasons well-being should be taught in schools, the first two being “the current flood of depression and the nominal increase in happiness over the last two generations” (Seligman, 2011, p. 80). It is the third reason that strongly supports why we should include well-being in school curricula: “Greater well-being enhances learning.” If your students are able to pay attention and think critically and creatively, they will have a more positive learning experience. They will be more successful in the real world, outside of our classroom. As teachers, this is our ultimate goal.

In looking for materials that could be used at the high school level, a person could be overwhelmed by the number of

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books, journal articles and websites available. How you might integrate topics related to the science of well-being into your semester or year-long class will depend on many factors. What follows are some topics and resources I recommend. I have also posted resources and suggestions on how they might be used in your course on my wiki (<http://getpsyched.wikispaces.com/>).

A great resource you can use to introduce your students to this topic is the TOPSS unit lesson plan on “Positive Psychology” (Fineburg, 2003): <http://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/topss/lessons/index.aspx>. It can be used as a supplement to your social psychology unit or as an introduction to a more extensive unit on positive psychology and well-being, depending on the time you have and the curriculum standards you are addressing.

“Authentic Happiness” (Seligman, 2002) introduced the public to the new positive psychology research. In “Flourish” (Seligman, 2011), Dr. Seligman re-defined the goal of positive psychology, saying it should be to increase flourishing. He identified five elements of well-being: positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment (PERMA). All are measurable, and all contribute to well-being. These books could be used as supplementary texts in your classroom or might be read in preparation for literature circle discussions or other research-based assignments. Along with these books, I highly recommend you use the “Authentic Happiness” website: <https://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/home>. Here, you can learn about positive psychology through readings, videos, research and questionnaires that can be used for discussion related to research or personal exploration and reflection. If you want your students to participate in the latest research, the Positive Psychology Center at the University of Pennsylvania, headed by Dr. Seligman, conducts online research studies. Most are for individuals 18 and over, but sometimes there are studies younger age groups can participate in. Connected to this site is the World Well-Being Project (WWBP): <http://www.wwbp.org/>. WWBP is a group of computer scientists, psychologists and statisticians collaborating to develop new techniques for measuring psychological and medical well-being based on language in social media.

Ed Diener (<http://internal.psychology.illinois.edu/~ediener/index.html>) is a leading researcher in positive psychology who coined the expression “subjective well-being” or SWB as the aspect of happiness that can be empirically measured. From his website you have access to resources including reprints of articles, scales and his current research. Diener has studied 155 countries, working with the Gallup World Poll, and discusses the happiest and unhappiest places in an interesting video, “Happiest Place on Earth by Professor

Ed Diener,” available on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WaHO1OHnc2s>. I usually show part of the video to my students in class and assign the remainder of it for homework. Questions specific to the contents of the video could be assigned for writing assignments and/or in preparation for class discussion or online forums.

Daniel Kahneman is an internationally renowned psychologist whose work spans cognitive psychology, behavioral economics and the science of well-being. Measuring individuals’ degree of happiness, what people want, what they enjoy — SWB — is hard to measure, but Kahneman believes it is important to pursue. He discusses what he calls the “puzzles” that surround well-being and happiness findings in the video “Explorations of the Mind: Well-Being With Daniel Kahneman,” which can be viewed at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f7cECaUAnTQ>. It is an excellent source of information for various student assignments, including research.

In 2008, Gallup and Healthways initiated a 25-year partnership merging decades of clinical research and development expertise, health leadership and behavioral economics research to track and understand the key factors that drive well-being (see <http://www.healthways.com/solution/default.aspx?id=1125>). This historic partnership marked a transformation for American health by developing a new national measure of well-being that provides leaders with the information they need to create solutions for making Americans healthier. The Gallup–Healthways Well-Being Index (<http://info.healthways.com/wbi2013>) provides an in-depth, real-time view of Americans’ well-being. The Well-Being Index includes topics such as physical and emotional health, healthy behaviors, work environment, social and community factors, financial security and access to necessities such as food, shelter and health care. My students found this information really enlightening along with links I used from the OECD Better Life Index (<http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/>). The Better Life Index is designed to identify and compare some of the key factors that contribute to well-being in OECD countries. It’s an interactive tool that allows you to see how countries perform according to the importance you give to each of the topics that make for a better life. Students rank 11 topics most important to them, and their rankings become part of a publicly accessible database, enabling them to compare their own Better Life Index with the indexes of other people around the world and see who else shares their view of the most important issues related to well-being; these are great activities for discussion, research and personal exploration and reflection.

An abundance of books have been written over the past 20 years addressing the research and application of many key

concepts associated with the science of well-being. I highly recommend you check out Activities for Teaching Positive Psychology: A Guide for Instructors (Froh & Parks, 2012). On my wiki (<http://getpsyched.wikispaces.com/>), I have posted a list of other resources, along with suggestions of how you might use them with your students.

You could spend months searching websites gathering information to supplement your lessons. Here are a few to get you started. Check my wiki for many more!

#### Positive Psychology Laboratory

<http://sonjalyubomirsky.com/>

With Professor Lyubomirsky, University of California, Riverside. This site provides papers, publications, full text articles and current research in the Positive Psychology Laboratory.

#### “The Scientific Pursuit of Happiness”

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y3huf9nArhY>

This keynote lecture by David Myers addresses factors surrounding our understanding of what it is to be “happy” — including relationships, religious faith, wealth, gender and a variety of character traits. This is an excellent introduction to the science of happiness and well-being research.

#### “Authentic Happiness”

<https://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/home>

With Dr. Seligman, University of Pennsylvania. Here you can learn about positive psychology through readings, videos, research, surveys and more.

#### Society of Counseling Psychology (APA Division 17) Section on Positive Psychology

<http://www.div17pospsych.com/>

This site includes information about positive psychology research, teaching and practice as well as events, strengths-based books and resources.

#### The Greater Good Science Center

<http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/>

This site studies the psychology, sociology and neuroscience of well-being. Links to core themes include readings, videos and activities.

#### Wellbeing Wizard

<http://www.wellbeingwizard.com/index.php>

This is an interactive website with links to many other resources students would find interesting.

#### Pursuit-of-Happiness.org (Teaching Happiness Inc.)

<http://www.pursuit-of-happiness.org/>

This site provides educators, students and the general public free access to clear, concise information on the history and scientific study of human happiness, positive psychology and mental well-being in general. History links explore the

ideas of major thinkers, from East and West, who devoted much of their lives to the pursuit of happiness. Science links review scientific studies that have been conducted, providing comprehensive reviews of each key study, videos and annotated bibliographies.

#### TED Talks

<http://www.ted.com/topics/happiness>

This site features exclusive articles and playlists on happiness.

#### TED: Understanding Happiness

<http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/Section/id-814228.html>

This site can enhance existing curricula in undergraduate education courses. Educators and students will find activities and multimedia resources that link the study of happiness to the real world, plus expanded academic content such as key terms, related journal articles and classic experiments

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## ENGAGING PSYCHOLOGY STUDENTS IN ONLINE CLASSES

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**W**e all know how challenging it is to create an online learning community as engaging as the face-to-face experience. While online courses offer advantages in terms of access and convenience, they lack the immediacy, spontaneity and energy generated in the classroom, the very factors that tend to engage students and build community. However, there are many strategies and principles we can employ to enhance the quality and student experience of online psychology classes, regardless of the particular delivery platform.

### HOOK THEM RIGHT FROM THE START

From students' first contact with the online course, we can generate interest and involvement. The course home page should be clear, simple and attractive. Links should be provided to all the important elements of the course, with "getting started" materials linked front and center. Informal research indicates students want to click as few times as possible and are less likely to read material "below the fold" (i.e., to scroll down for details).

There are a number of strategies for immediately connecting with students and reinforcing familiarity with the course materials. Suggestions include requiring a syllabus quiz as a first activity, providing a scavenger hunt through the elements of the course, sending an email with questions requiring a student's response or providing a course agreement form with space for questions.

One critical strategy for personalizing the course and building connections is to require students to post introductions (Schrum and Hong, 2002). The prompt for this can be as

simple as asking each student to "tell us about yourself" or requesting a more structured response to a series of questions. One effective way to include and honor cultural differences is to ask students to talk about their names (first or last, how they were named, the meaning of their name, etc.).

If possible, requesting photos or avatar pictures helps students create a three-dimensional presence in the online setting. (*Note:* Students should be able to opt out of introductions or posting a photo if they feel uncomfortable with this assignment.) Be sure to include an instructor biography as well, ideally one that is more personal and less formal. Be present consistently and often.

Students can tell if you're "there" or absent in the virtual classroom by how frequently you make your presence known. It's critical to respond to emails promptly, even if it's just to acknowledge receipt and promise to follow up. Students find it helpful when instructors are clear about the types of communication that should take place and instructors' timelines for responding to inquiries (Graham, Cagiltay, Lim, Craner, & Duffy, 2001). Instructors have found a multitude of ways to make their contact more personal, for example, with a welcome email or audio/visual recorded lectures, announcements and assignment feedback. As in any class, students appreciate personalized feedback in the form of comments on their assignments. (*Hint:* These can be copied and pasted from a list of common comments and then personalized with a name.) One advantage of some of the current platforms is you can easily contact students who miss assignments, and you can send encouraging messages to students regarding exam performance. In the Canvas

*continued on page 10*



platform, for example, you can capture all students who earned an A, or any grade, and send a common email. Each of these strategies has the benefit of making your presence in the online class palpable to students.

## BUILD COMMUNITY

It can be more challenging to build a sense of community in online courses, but there are ways to encourage students to connect with you and each other. Make interactive discussions the heart of the class, posting questions that ask students to apply the material (e.g., “What’s an example in your life of different kinds of retrieval cues?”), take on controversial subjects (e.g., “Given cultural differences, is spanking ever appropriate as a discipline tool?”) and/or use critical thinking to support an argument (e.g., “Given the text definition, is there such a thing as an ‘American’ culture?” or “Should involuntary commitment be harder or easier?”). Threaded discussions can be used very effectively to impart the content of the course (Edelstein and Edwards, 2002).

The instructions for online discussions can help ensure responses will be academically rigorous. For example, instructors can require references to the text and/or outside materials or a specific number of responses to other students and provide criteria for high-quality responses. Studies have found that student participation is encouraged by early, formative discussion, grading and clear criteria for high-quality, thoughtful postings (Nagel, Blignaut, and Cronje, 2009). In addition, a study by Graham et al. found that “well-designed discussion assignments facilitate meaningful cooperation among students” (2001, para. 8). Instructors can play a minimal but critical role in guiding these discussions.

Whenever possible, create opportunities for students to engage with each other. Some faculty set up a “student lounge” or open discussion area for informal exchanges. In some courses, posting student assignments for other students to read and respond to can provide some excellent interface (e.g., student write-ups of field experiences). Many current platforms also allow for small group work or collaborative projects to encourage interaction.

## MAKE ASSIGNMENTS ENGAGING

This is important in any class and particularly in the virtual classroom. Use opportunities to create interesting assignments students can complete in multiple venues, for example visiting a mental health agency or observing and writing up some facet of human behavior. There are many online labs available, such as [APA’s Online Psychology Lab](#), that provide visual demonstrations of course principles and make the course livelier. Publishers also often provide interactive websites that elicit student interest. You can send students to reputable Internet sites to gather information or take an online assessment. (*Note: Validity and reliability have to be addressed here, of course.*) Assigning tasks that require

students to apply theories to real-world situations is another way to elevate the quality of student work along with making the assignments more involving (Graham, et al., 2001).

## CONCLUSION

Most importantly, it is beneficial to share ideas with colleagues as to what works well to engage students in the online setting. Schedule some show-and-tell sessions to see what your colleagues are doing. One effective way to do this is to set up laptops around a table with courses pulled up for a “speed dating” kind of exchange. Another practice that has been very effective at my college is to arrange usability testing in which you can observe a small set of students thinking out loud as they try to navigate your course — enlightening! Our faculty have identified three essential principles for engaging students and offering effective online courses regardless of specific strategies: Provide clear expectations and instructions; make the course accessible to all students; and be consistent, responsive and present during the course. Student engagement, experience and learning will be greatly enhanced as a result.

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DR. HELEN TAYLOR

Dr. Helen Taylor is a faculty member in the Psychology Department at Bellevue College in Bellevue, WA. She has taught online for 12 years, has designed three online classes, gives workshops on online teaching and recently chaired a committee on Quality Online Education for the Social Sciences at Bellevue College. She is currently serving on the Psychology Teachers at Community Colleges Committee of the APA.





## HIGH SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY: A COMING OF AGE STORY

KENNETH D. KEITH  
University of San Diego

ELIZABETH YOST HAMMER  
Xavier University of Louisiana

CHARLES T. BLAIR-BROEKER  
Cedar Falls High School (Cedar Falls, IA)

RANDAL M. ERNST  
Lincoln Public Schools (Lincoln, NE)

*[T]he 1990s brought several landmark developments for high school psychology, including the establishment of Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools (TOPSS), a number of university-sponsored institutes providing professional development for teachers and inauguration of the Advanced Placement (AP) Psychology program.*

*The following abstract is from:*

Keith, K. D., Hammer, E. Y., Blair-Broeker, C.T., & Ernst, R. M. (2013). High school psychology: A coming of age story *Teaching of Psychology*, 40(4) 311-317.

**A**lthough institutional recognition of high school psychology is fairly recent, psychology and psychological subject matters have a history dating to at least the 1830s. By the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, high school psychology courses existed in nearly all U.S. states, and enrollments grew throughout the second half of the century. However, courses were usually elective, and most teachers lacked degrees in psychology. Studies in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century suggested that high school psychology courses did little to prepare students for college-level psychology, probably because the high school classes often did not include core subject matters of psychological science. However, the 1990s brought several landmark developments for high school psychology, including the establishment of Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools (TOPSS), a number of university-sponsored institutes providing professional development for teachers and inauguration of the Advanced Placement (AP) Psychology program. Today, high school psychology teachers enjoy increased recognition within the American Psychological Association (APA), availability of significant teaching resources and national standards to guide course development. A million students annually take high school psychology, with about a quarter million taking the AP psychology exam. The course is now recognized as an important first exposure to psychological science.

The full article can be found at  
<http://on.apa.org/1lnZdDx>. PTN

## FALL WORKSHOPS

**WITH DATES PENDING AT PRESS TIME**

New Jersey Teachers of Psychology Conference at Monmouth Regional High School  
Contact: **Audrey Dill** (Tinton Falls, NJ)

Fox Valley Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools (FOXTOPSS)

Contact: **Amy Ramponi** (Kimberly, WI.); Follow on Twitter at **@amyramponi**

**Milwaukee Area Teachers of Psychology (MATOP)**

Contact: **Kent Korek** (Germantown, WI)

## UTAH TEACHERS OF PSYCHOLOGY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS (UTOPSS) CONFERENCE

Friday, October 3, 2014

Westminster College  
Salt Lake City, UT

The UTOPSS conference will be held on Friday, October 3, 2014. A registration fee of \$50 includes continental breakfast, lunch and workshop materials. Randy Ernst of Lincoln Public Schools (Nebraska) is the keynote speaker. Sessions include a Participant Idea Share and breakout sessions on Advanced Placement (AP) psychology, introductory psychology, sport psychology, and more. For registration and additional details, contact Kristin Whitlock, [kwhitlock@dsdmail.net](mailto:kwhitlock@dsdmail.net).

## STP ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON TEACHING (ACT)

October 10-11, 2014

Wyndham Atlanta Galleria  
6345 Powers Ferry Road NW  
Atlanta, GA

The Society for the Teaching of Psychology (STP) is excited to announce the STP Annual Conference on Teaching (ACT) on October 10-11, 2014. This conference will have tracks related to APA's new learning goals for the undergraduate psychology major: (1) knowledge base in psychology, (2) scientific inquiry and critical thinking, (3) ethical and social responsibility in a diverse world, (4) communication and (5) professional development. The conference will also include keynote speakers, symposia and a poster session. For more information, go to <http://www.teachpsych.org/conferences/bp/index.php>

## MID-ATLANTIC TEACHING OF PSYCHOLOGY CONFERENCE (MATOP)

October 17, 2014

Prince George's Community College  
Largo, MD

The Prince George's Community College (PGCC) Department of Psychology and Argosy University are sponsoring the 16th Annual Mid-Atlantic Teachers of Psychology (MATOP) conference on the teaching of psychology on October 17, 2014. Dr. Susan Nolan, Seton Hall University, will deliver the keynote on this year's theme — Internationalizing the Teaching of Psychology. Dr. Nolan is the vice president for Diversity and International Relations of the Society for the Teaching of Psychology. She serves as an ambassador to the United Nations for psychology. For more information about MATOP, contact Diane Finley, PhD, at [dfinley@pgcc.edu](mailto:dfinley@pgcc.edu).

## NORTHEAST CONFERENCE FOR TEACHERS OF PSYCHOLOGY (NECTOP)

October 17, 2014

Bates College  
Lewiston, ME

The Northeast Conference for Teachers of Psychology (NECTOP) will be held on October 17, 2014, at Bates College in Lewiston, ME. NECTOP is held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the New England Psychological Association. For more information, go to <http://www.newenglandpsychological.org/>.

*continued on page 13*



*continued from page 12*

## **SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA TEACHING OF PSYCHOLOGY CONFERENCE (SCTOP)**

**October 18, 2014**

**Grossmont College  
El Cajon, CA**

The fifth annual Southern California Teaching of Psychology Conference (SCToP) will be held on Saturday, October 18, 2014. Psychology instructors from high schools, two-year colleges, and four-year colleges and universities are invited to attend. The two keynote speakers are:

**Karen Huffman**, author of several introductory psychology textbooks including “Psychology in Action,” will present on “The Negative Side of Electronics and What It’s Doing to Social Skills.”

**Jean Twenge**, author of “Generation Me,” will present on teaching today’s young adults.

For more information, go to the conference website at <http://tinyurl.com/kjq7lmv>.

## **NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE SOCIAL STUDIES (NCSS) CONFERENCE**

**November 21-23, 2014**

**John B. Hynes Veterans Memorial Convention Center  
900 Boylston Street  
Boston, MA**

The 94th annual conference of the National Council for the Social Studies will be held in Boston, MA, on November 21-23, 2014. More information about the NCSS Conference is available online at <http://www.socialstudies.org/conference>.

## **NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON THE TEACHING OF PSYCHOLOGY (NITOP)**

**January 3-6, 2015**

**TradeWinds Island Grand Hotel  
St. Pete Beach, FL**

The 37th annual National Institute on the Teaching of Psychology will be held on January 3-6, 2015, at the TradeWinds Island Grand Hotel in St. Pete Beach, FL. Registration is limited to 375 participants; early registration is highly recommended.

The conference program includes four morning workshops on the first day, three poster sessions, three participant idea exchanges, social hours, book and software displays and 30 featured speakers, well-known for their excellence in teaching psychology. The conference fee is \$545, which also includes buffet breakfasts and lunches, refreshments at coffee breaks and poster sessions and an evening reception. For more information, contact Joanne Fetzner (phone: 217/398-6969 or email [Jfetznr@illinois.edu](mailto:Jfetznr@illinois.edu)) or visit the NITOP website at <http://www.nitop.org>.

## MORE LOCAL TEACHING GROUPS: UTOPSS AND NETOP

The lead article in the May 2014 *PTN* discussed the benefits of local networks of psychology teachers and provided examples of several groups (Ramponi, 2014). A new webpage has since been added to the APA TOPSS website to list groups in various states: <http://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/topss/state-local-groups.aspx>. As noted online, any group that uses the TOPSS name is required to complete a form stating the group will make clear that it is not formally affiliated with APA.

Details about two additional groups in Utah and New England are provided below as information.

### UTAH-TEACHERS OF PSYCHOLOGY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS (UTOPSS)

The Utah-Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools (UTOPSS) is a grassroots organization. Its purpose is to support the teaching of scientific psychology in the schools. The annual UTOPSS Fall Conference is the primary point of contact for psychology teachers in our state. The conference is held at Westminster College in Salt Lake City, UT. It is a collaborative effort between high school and college faculty. Guest speakers are distinguished faculty from local and national colleges, universities and high schools. Our guests update our participants with new research in their fields of expertise and provide many valuable resources. Teachers also have opportunities to ask questions, network with other teachers and walk away with textbooks and other materials that have been generously donated.

Invitations to the UTOPSS Fall Conference are disseminated through our UTOPSS email Listserv. Registration information is also spread through the Teaching of High School Psychology Blog (<http://teachinghighschoolpsychology.blogspot.com/>) and the AP psychology teacher community (<https://apcommunity.collegeboard.org/web/apppsychology>). The UTOPSS conference routinely has 50–60 participants, both high school and college, from all over the state, with some visitors from surrounding states. The cost for the full-day conference, including continental breakfast and buffet lunch, is \$50. The

UTOPSS Conference is a wonderful opportunity for teachers to learn from some of the best in the field and from each other. Please join us! For more information, contact Kristin Whitlock ([kwhitlock@dsdmail.net](mailto:kwhitlock@dsdmail.net)).

### NEW ENGLAND TEACHERS OF PSYCHOLOGY (NETOP)

The NETOP workshop brings high school psychology teachers from the six New England states together to talk about the teaching of psychological science. Each year, this one-day workshop is hosted by Hopkinton High School in Massachusetts. This grassroots organization endeavors to provide teachers with ready-to-use teaching activities, new classroom resources and an opportunity to get reenergized for the upcoming school year. The workshop also features engaging guest speakers from universities in the region. Past speakers include Gerry Koocher, PhD (former APA President), Dr. Chris Hakala of Western New England University and cognitive neuroscientists Dr. Rebecca Saxe and Dr. Emile Bruneau of MIT's Saxelab. The afternoon session of our workshop is dedicated to the collegial sharing of teaching ideas and has been facilitated by master teacher Michael Sullivan.

Our ongoing goal is to create and nurture networks with other psychology teachers from the area and provide quality professional development in as economical a way as possible. The cost of the workshop is \$20, and the registration fee includes lunch and materials. The 3rd Annual New England Teachers of Psychology (NETOP) Workshop was held at Hopkinton High School in Massachusetts on Wednesday, August 13. Our fourth annual meeting will be held in the same location in mid-August 2015. I hope you will join us! You will leave with many great ideas you can use immediately with your classes as well as the most up to date resources for high school psychology.

To learn more about this workshop, please contact Mike Hamilton ([mhamilton@hopkinton.k12.ma.us](mailto:mhamilton@hopkinton.k12.ma.us)) or visit: <https://sites.google.com/a/hopkinton.k12.ma.us/netop>.

### REFERENCE

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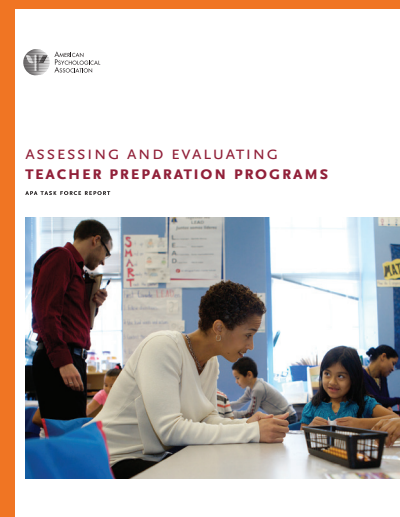


## “ASSESSING AND EVALUATING TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS: APA TASK FORCE REPORT”

The APA Center for Psychology in Schools and Education (CPSE) wanted to share with *PTN* readers a report just released by the American Psychological Association. Authored by seven experts in measurement and teacher education policy, the document features the potential utility of three methods for assessing teacher education program effectiveness: (1) value-added assessments of student achievement, (2) standardized observation protocols and (3) surveys of teacher performance. The report highlights the benefits and limitations of each of these methodologies for

evaluating teacher education programs and provides a set of recommendations for their optimal use by teacher education programs and other stakeholders.

The report is available at <http://www.apa.org/ed/schools/cpse/teacher-preparation-programs.pdf>. Please share it with your colleagues and let CPSE know if you have any questions. CPSE welcomes your feedback and reactions ([rsubotnik@apa.org](mailto:rsubotnik@apa.org)).



## NEWS FROM TOPSS & PT@CC

### PT@CC STUDENT PRESENTATION AWARD WINNERS

Each spring the APA Committee of Psychology Teachers at Community Colleges (PT@CC) announces the PT@CC Student Presentation Contest to recognize innovative and high-quality electronic presentations by community college psychology students.

The PT@CC Committee extends thanks and appreciation to the APA Education Directorate for supporting this award. In addition, special thanks go to all of the students who participated in the 2014 competition. Join us in congratulating this year's winners and their PT@CC sponsors.

<b>First Place</b>	<p>“Gender Differences in Expressing Verbal Gratitude”            Presentation by Renee Aka, Candace Barksdale and Adam Hakes  <b>PT@CC</b> Sponsor: Joline Bourdages, San Diego Mesa College</p>
<b>Second Place</b>	<p>“Physical Activity and Anxiety in Veterans of the Afghanistan and Iraq Wars”            Presentation by Brian Betthausen  <b>PT@CC</b> Sponsor: Jodi Richardson-Delgado, Mesa Community College</p>
<b>Third Place</b>	<p>“Anonymity in Driving Behavior”            Presentation by Shawn Bray, Zehna Gilliam and Skye Simonelli  <b>PT@CC</b> Sponsor: Joline Bourdages, San Diego Mesa College</p>

To view these projects online, go to <http://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/undergrad/ptacc/student-presentation.aspx>. Details about the **2015 Student Presentation Contest** are posted online at <http://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/undergrad/ptacc/ptcc-contest-guidelines.aspx>.

**PT@CC**

## 2014 APA TOPSS COMPETITION FOR HIGH SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY STUDENTS

The APA Committee of Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools (TOPSS) recognized Miriam Hauptman of Ladue Horton Watkins High School (St. Louis, MO), Rebecca Jordan of Rye High School (Rye, NY), Emory Nager of North Salem High School (North Salem, NY) and Milena Pirman of Kimberly High School (Appleton, WI) as the student winners of the 2014 APA

TOPSS Competition for High School Psychology Students. Each student received a \$250 scholarship. Funding is provided by the APA Education Directorate. For the 2014 competition, students were asked to submit an essay exploring the current prevalence, impact and/or implications of obesity. Along with describing the biopsychosocial factors that contribute to obesity, students were also asked to offer a solution using psychological science.



## NEW TOPSS UNIT LESSON PLAN

A new TOPSS unit lesson plan on “Perspectives in Psychological Science” has been posted to the TOPSS website at <http://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/topss/lessons/index.aspx>.

This unit contains three suggested lessons: Evolution of Psychological Science, Psychological Perspectives, and Subfields of Psychological Science and Practice. In addition, the unit contains a section with brief notes on additional

key people; a section with suggested teaching activities; and a section with resources, references and suggested readings. The lesson plan updates the content on history and perspectives found in the original unit lesson plan, “An Introduction to the Field of Psychology.”



## 2014 PT@CC AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN THE SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING AND LEARNING AT A TWO-YEAR COLLEGE OR CAMPUS

The APA Committee of Psychology Teachers at Community Colleges (PT@CC) selected Kimberley Duff, PhD, of Cerritos College in Norwalk, CA, as the recipient of the APA PT@CC Award for Excellence in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning at a Two-Year College or

Campus. This national award recognizes the important contributions of psychology teachers at two-year institutions. Duff was honored at the PT@CC and Psi Beta Awards Ceremony and Reception at the APA Convention in Washington, DC. A press release on Dr. Duff appears on the APA website at <http://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/index.aspx>.



**PT@CC**





## FUN AND QUICK OPENERS

As psychology teachers, we are always looking for fun quick ideas that can be incorporated into our classrooms. Please feel free to submit ideas to Amy Ramponi of Kimberly High School, Kimberly, WI, at [amyramponi@gmail.com](mailto:amyramponi@gmail.com), and we will add a couple in future issues.

### FROM ALLISON SHAVER, PLYMOUTH SOUTH HIGH SCHOOL, MA

To introduce the theories of emotion, I have my students play charades. In one hat we put slips of paper listing emotions (created by my students); in another hat, scenarios (also created by my students) and in yet another hat several slips of paper with the three theories of emotion (e.g., James-Lange, Cannon-Bard, Two-Factor Theory). As a team, they pull one slip of paper from each hat, and the team has to "perform" this scenario for the class with the correct emotion and theory. It can end up being hysterical, especially when scenarios and emotions are paired oddly together.

### FROM JENNIFER SCHLICHT, BONNER SPRINGS HIGH SCHOOL, KS

When teaching Piaget's stages, I ask students to share their personal experiences with characters such as the Tooth Fairy, Santa and the Easter Bunny. We share the funny pictures of us screaming on Santa's lap as babies, the wonder and awe of Santa (or another character) once we knew what Santa was and all the ways our parents tried to convince us those characters were real. We then discuss at what age we put all the pieces together regarding the truth about these characters. After sharing our fun stories, we relate the events of our experiences to Piaget's stages and discuss *why* it's so easy to believe when you are a small child.

### FROM AMY RAMPONI, KIMBERLY HIGH SCHOOL, WI

I introduce the learning and conditioning unit in my psychology class with a box of "Harry Potter" jelly beans. (*Note:* Some are normal flavors, and some are gross flavors like sausage or dirt, which are pretty horrible.) I ask for volunteers and feed them these jelly beans randomly. Some get gross flavors and run to spit them out. Some get delicious flavors and ask for more. Then, I offer the whole class (normal) jelly beans.

This quick demonstration has so many aspects of learning — discrimination, generalization, reinforcement, punishment, primary reinforcer, vicarious learning, modeling, and it hits home learning's definition — the relatively permanent change in behavior due to experience.

### FROM JOSEPH SWOPE, NORTHWEST HIGH SCHOOL, MD

A favorite activity is the operant conditioning activity. It is a variation on the getting warmer/getting colder game. One student volunteer is asked to wait outside the classroom and to be the "subject." The other students agree on a target behavior for the subject, such as crawling under a desk or twirling in place. Another student volunteer will be the "trainer." When the subject reenters the room, he or she is instructed to do the target behavior based on the reward and punishment of hearing hot and cold from the trainer. The activity can be planned so that nearly all vocabulary terms can be woven into it. The lesson is that clear and immediate feedback can get anyone to do almost anything. It gets students to think about the countless rewards and punishments they face every day.

### FROM LARA BRUNER, DESERT VISTA HIGH SCHOOL, AZ

To explore research methods and sensory interaction, my students complete a gustation lab. They attempt to identify eight different baby foods, using taste only then adding smell and sight. They correlate this with relative papillae density on their tongues. Students analyze gender trends, taste-smell interaction and the confounding variables in the study, making suggestions for improving the study. If you want more pleasant but less pure flavors, you can use ice cream, Jelly Bellies, flavored chips or candy sticks (sold at Cracker Barrel). Students seem to really enjoy the lab and gain a better understanding of methods in psychological research. **PTN**

## IN HONOR OF CHARLES BREWER, PHD

ALAN FELDMAN  
Glen Rock High School, NJ



Every high school psychology teacher (and many university professors) owes a thank you to Charles Brewer, PhD. Charles Brewer has been one of my intellectual heroes since I met him at Clemson University at the first Advanced Placement (AP) Psychology Reading in 1992. There were about 20 readers in total that first year — no supervisory table leaders, just two great question leaders. We had no paper rubric — the two rubrics were written on the whiteboards at the front and side of the room. When we arrived, we divided the group into graders for question 1 and the rest for question 2. Brewer returned late (about 90 seconds) one day from lunch, as he was visiting a geology museum on the floor. When he walked in he said something like — “I apologize for being late — I was at the geology museum, and they did not want to let me out as they thought I was a relic.” For faculty night, Brewer (with props) gave his talk about John B. Watson. I was hooked.

*Dr. Brewer has greatly enhanced the quality of education in psychology through classroom teaching, mentorship, scholarship, program consultation and service.*

Dr. Brewer has greatly enhanced the quality of education in psychology through classroom teaching, mentorship, scholarship, program consultation and service. He is an acclaimed master teacher whose presentations and “felicity of expression” are legendary and whose mentorship has been

invaluable to colleagues and students alike. More than 200 of his students have earned doctoral degrees in psychology. He has attended and lectured at numerous AP summer institutes, as well as the APA/Clark University Workshop sponsored by APA, Clark University and the American Psychological Foundation.

Dr. Brewer has been an especially staunch advocate of precollege and undergraduate psychology. He nurtured the development of APA’s Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools (TOPSS), the National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula and the APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major. He also played a key role in developing and expanding the membership affiliate categories for high school psychology teachers.

Dr. Brewer has served APA through membership on the APA Council of Representatives, Board of Directors and Board of Educational Affairs as well as numerous task forces. He was president of APA Division 1 (Society for General Psychology) and Division 2 (Society for the Teaching of Psychology). He shepherded the journal *Teaching of Psychology* to maturity and national recognition during his 12 years as its editor. Dr. Brewer’s many awards include the American Psychological Foundation’s Distinguished Teaching in Psychology Award (later renamed in his honor) and the APA Award for Distinguished Career Contributions to Education and Training in Psychology.

Dr. Brewer has been a stellar ambassador for psychology for more than 40 years. He has been a wise consultant to more

*continued on page 19*



than 45 psychology programs, a leader in major psychology education conferences and a grader of the AP psychology tests since the test's inception in 1992. He was the chair of the AP psychology test development committee for many years and instituted changes that greatly improved the quality of the AP psychology test.

I could tell many delightful stories about Dr. Brewer's sense of humor ("Psychology is the most fun you can have with your clothes on!" or "The job of a teacher is to kick some academic butt."), but I want to mention two other things about him.

Over the last 22 years, I have bothered Charles Brewer about 25 times a year asking him for his expert opinion on various psychology topics. He has answered every question with kindness, brevity, clarity and insight. I am very grateful and so are my students.

Finally, as many of you know, in the 20th century there was an exceptionally well-published mathematician named Paul Erdos. There is wonderful movie about him as well as a few books; a particularly interesting one is by Paul Hoffman. These books describe something called the Erdos number. An Erdos number of 1 means you published an article directly with Paul Erdos. An Erdos number of 2 means you were taught by a mathematician that published an article with Erdos — it goes on to higher Erdos numbers; you get the picture. I propose here today the "Brewer number" based on how directly a teacher has interacted and learned from Charles Brewer. How many teachers and students has Charles Brewer influenced! I cannot speak about the Brewer number for others — just myself. Here goes: I directly interacted with Charles Brewer many times and learned from him. My Brewer number is a 1. I have been teaching psychology workshops continually since 1993 for the College Board/ETS and other organizations, particularly in

the summer. I would guess I have taught or interacted with probably 4,000 teachers over that time. So all those teachers have a Brewer number of 2. Each of these teachers has likely taught a few thousand students since I was a consultant for a class they were enrolled in. The students have a Brewer number of 3. I think we can realize this number gets very large very fast and of course, this is only my own experience. If we figured out the Brewer number for just the people reading this newsletter, it would be a staggering. When you consider all the other teachers and students Brewer has influenced during his career (including his 250 or so students that went on to get doctorates in psychology), the number is astronomical.

*"Good teachers stretch the mind, and they stretch the heart. I hope that the acorns I have planted will grow into strong oak trees that will provide refreshing shade on a hot day."*

I would like to finish with a quote from Dr. Brewer's talk entitled "A Talk to Teachers Bending Twigs and Affecting Eternity."

"Good teachers stretch the mind, and they stretch the heart. I hope that the acorns I have planted will grow into strong oak trees that will provide refreshing shade on a hot day. I hope that the world will be a little better place because I made a difference to somebody. And that is what teaching is all about."

Charles Brewer, you have stretched teachers as well as thousands of students. We are grateful. **PTN**

## OTHER NEWS

### THE EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH (THEO) PROGRAM

I/O psychology is among the fastest growing professions in the United States, yet many people do not even know the field exists, despite the varied and important things people in the field do. For example, I/O psychologists have:

- Worked with NASA to build effective teams
- Testified before the Supreme Court
- Designed and evaluated military training
- Helped improve global development and aid efforts

The Educational Outreach (THEO) Program is here to help spread the word about I/O psychology. The THEO Program is a newly created listing of SIOP members who have agreed to travel locally and give introductory talks about I/O psychology to high school classes and similar communities of interest. These I/O psychologists can talk to your class, club or group about the jobs I/O psychologists do, the topics I/O psychologists study and the training needed to become an I/O psychologist. The list currently comprises more than 550 volunteer SIOP members.

Check for an I/O psychologist in your area today! Visit <http://www.siop.org/instruct/theo.aspx>.

## MEET THE 2014 APA TOPSS EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD WINNERS

BY AMY RAMPONI

Kimberly High School, Kimberly, WI



**LARA BRUNER**

**LARA BRUNER**

**Desert Vista High School,  
Phoenix, AZ**

Lara Bruner is described by her principal as “highly effective, passionate and energetic.” Bruner’s schedule includes psychology and AP psychology that function as dual-enrollment Psychology

101 through Rio Salado Community College. Her passion for teaching and working with young adults is evidenced by her contributions to organizing “Brain Bee” neuroscience competition teams (including the 2011 Arizona Brain Bee champion team and two individual first place finishers), initiating the creation of the first Arizona Teaching of Psychology Conference in 2014 and serving in countless organizations and committees dedicated to education and teaching.

Bruner was responsible for setting up an independent study program in psychology in her district to allow students to work on and perform actual psychological research and to then submit the research for publication or for competition. According to students and colleagues, Bruner stresses the importance of psychology’s being a sound science and emphasizes good research and experimental practices in her classroom activities and projects.

Bruner prefers a hands-on style in the many activities she uses to teach psychology. She also uses various teaching methods, for example, having students construct detailed models of the brain; teaching a lesson on identifying lies, which includes an expert guest speaker and application activities of lie detection; pairing her high school students with preschoolers to investigate developmental theories; using digital graphic organizers; and, during her sensation unit, employing an interactive lab to test the olfaction–gustation connection.

One of Bruner’s strengths as a teacher is surely her ability to teach her students skills they require for postsecondary education, skills like problem solving, deep processing, study skills and, most importantly, passion for life-long learning.

Bruner’s students say she forces them to think analytically and be creative and inspires them to make psychology “a part of the rest of their lives.” Congratulations to Lara Bruner for being named an APA TOPSS Excellence Award Winner for 2014!



**WILL ELMHORST**

**WILLIAM ELMHORST**

**Marshfield High School,  
Marshfield, WI**

William Elmhurst considers critical thinking, making psychology relevant for his students and teaching them to question “why?” as the top components of his psychology classes at Marshfield High School in Marshfield, WI.

This 2014 TOPSS Award winner has been teaching for 23 years and has an impressive résumé under his belt: He has served as the membership coordinator and chair for the TOPSS Committee and as an AP psychology reader for the past seven years, developed and implemented the AP psychology curriculum at his school, co-authored the introductory textbook “Psychology” for Pearson Publishers, authored the AP supplemental text for the “Psychology: AP Edition” by Pearson, created a Listserv for psychology networking, served as a Master Teacher at the 2007 Institute for High School Psychology Teachers on biopsychology held at the University of Wisconsin–Green Bay and chaired the first (now annual) Center of Wisconsin Teachers of Psychology Symposium (COWTOPS) in 2013. In addition, Elmhurst initiated the creation of the “Resource Manual for New Teachers of High School Psychology,” a TOPSS resource for new psychology teachers, while he chaired the committee.

Along with teaching critical thinking skills, Elmhurst believes his true teaching strength lies in bringing his varied work experiences, life experiences, skill sets and passions into the psychology curriculum. He cites an ability to connect with kids with diverse life experiences and show them how psychology can connect to their lives. (Elmhurst, a musician and songwriter in his own right, has been known to break out the acoustic guitar and serenade classes with applicable psychology-relevant tunes.)

Students and colleagues of Elmhurst all agree that with his interest in and knowledge of psychology, his passion for psychology is infectious — as is the rigor of his teaching. A member of the Marshfield graduating class of 2014 sums Elmhurst up best by writing, “His teaching style challenged us thoroughly.” Congratulations to Will Elmhurst for being named an APA TOPSS Excellence Award Winner for 2014!

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**JOSEPH SWOPE**

**JOSEPH SWOPE, PHD**  
**Northwest High School,**  
**Germantown, MD**

A former student of TOPSS Excellence Award winner Joseph Swope, PhD, says “His teaching style was unlike anything I had ever imagined, breaking the infinite measure of the mind into teachable

lessons that included popular shows or film clips to drive the point home to students who would much prefer video games to school.” Swope’s fervor in the classroom is evident in the impact he has made on former students, colleagues and administrators in his building.

Swope’s accomplishments in the field of education are impressive. Swope is a national board-certified teacher, a published author, an adjunct professor at two community colleges, a researcher in the field of self-hypnosis and a software designer and web guru, and he recently earned his PhD in general psychology. In addition to these impressive

accomplishments, Swope shares his expertise and gives back to the psychology community by serving as an AP psychology exam reader, regularly presenting at local high school psychology conferences and advising the Silicon Valley as an educational consultant. You can see Swope’s work at his website [swopepsych.com](http://swopepsych.com) or by checking out a copy of his book “Need for Magic,” a novel in which social psychology and mental manipulation become magic.

An example of Swope’s passion for teaching through engaging activities and making psychology relevant to students can be seen in his operant conditioning activity in which he uses operant conditioning principles, reinforcing students with M&Ms as they make trashcan baskets. The discussion that follows the activity allows students to see the connection between reinforcements and behaviors.

One of Swope’s colleagues, Emily DeSantolo of Northwest High School, says, “I am not at all exaggerating when I say Joe Swope is one of the best teachers in America.”

Congratulations to Joseph Swope on being an APA TOPSS Excellence Award winner for 2014!

## **PT@CC TEACHING RESOURCES AWARD WINNERS**

The APA Committee of Psychology Teachers at Community Colleges (PT@CC) is pleased to announce the winners of the PT@CC Teaching Resources Awards.

Developed as a means to recognize and encourage sharing of high-quality instructional techniques, the contest guidelines invited community college instructors to submit an original demonstration, an individual or group class activity, an interactive teaching/learning module or other pedagogy designed to illustrate a psychological concept or theory.

PT@CC extends thanks and appreciation to the APA Education Directorate for support of the Teaching Resources Awards. In addition, special thanks go to all of the psychology faculty members who participated in the competition. Join us in congratulating this year’s winners!

<b>First Place</b>	“Classroom Demonstration of Neural Transmission” Sue Frantz, Highline Community College (WA)
<b>Tied for Second Place</b>	“Get Your Class Back! Free Your Class From Cell Phones in 5 Minutes” Louise Katz, Columbia State Community College (TN)
<b>Tied for Second Place</b>	“Normal or Abnormal?” Richard Alexander, Muskegon Community College (MI)

These teaching resources are posted on the APA website at <http://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/undergrad/ptacc/teaching-awards.aspx>.

**PT@CC**

## APA/CLARK UNIVERSITY WORKSHOP CELEBRATES 10 YEARS

The 10th annual APA/Clark University Workshop for High School Teachers was held June 30–July 2, 2014, at Clark University in Worcester, MA. Over the last decade, more than 200 teachers have attended the workshop.

Following is a press release from Clark University. The 11th workshop will be held during the summer of 2015; all high school psychology teachers are encouraged to apply (details will be posted to the TOPSS website later this fall). The workshop is limited to 25 teachers.



From <http://news.clarku.edu/news/>

### GUREL APA-CLARK UNIVERSITY WORKSHOP FOR HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS CELEBRATES 10 YEARS

Thursday, July 10, 2014

In the past decade, more than 200 high school teachers from around the country have traveled to Clark during the summer to attend the annual Lee Gurel [American Psychological Association–Clark University](#) Workshop for High School Teachers. This year, participants left the workshop with new contacts, textbooks and posters, and some took with them something a bit more personal: a “selfie” with the “Father of Psychoanalysis” himself, Sigmund Freud. Several participants headed to Clark’s Red Square to pose with Freud’s life-sized bronze statue and posted their photos to Pinterest and Instagram. Workshop attendees also shared their thoughts about the workshop via social media.

For 10 years, the [APA Education Directorate](#) and the [APA Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools \(TOPSS\)](#) have collaborated with the University to develop the workshop; workshops feature presentations on timely topics by TOPSS members and Clark psychology professors. This year, lectures were given by Psychology Professor [Michael Addis](#) (on men’s mental health), Psychology Professor [Wendy Grolnick](#) (on motivation) and by the director of Clark’s Hiatt Center for Urban Education, [Katerine Bielaczyc](#) (on human learning).

[Mary Kite](#), professor of psychology at Ball State University, delivered the keynote address, “Developing Students’ Multicultural Competence: Practical Advice for Difficult Dialogues,” and Randy Ernst of Lincoln Public Schools (Nebraska) and Nancy Fenton of Adlai E. Stevenson High School (Illinois) provided attendees with recommendations for classroom activities that engage high school students in inquiry-based learning about psychology.

“The Clark workshop has become our flagship professional development event for high school psychology teachers. APA recognizes how important high school psychology classes are for teaching the next generation about psychological science,”

said Emily Leary Chesnes, assistant director of Precollege and Undergraduate Education at the APA. “This workshop provides teachers with an incredible opportunity to network with each other and learn from the experts.”

Workshop participants also visited the University Archive to see significant historical documents, view the place where the APA was founded back in 1892, and toured several psychology laboratories.

“This workshop is one of the few that provide high school teachers the opportunity to both sharpen pedagogy and learn about cutting-edge research. We are proud to play a part in this collaboration, and expect to continue to host this important event in the future. Clark has a distinguished history with the development of the field of psychology, and our faculty are able to demonstrate how we are linking teaching and research in innovative ways,” said Associate Provost and Dean of Research [Nancy Budwig](#).

The idea for a workshop for high school teachers grew from the vision and generosity of Clark alumnus Dr. Lee Gurel, who studied psychology and was granted a bachelor’s degree from Clark in 1948. The workshop is co-sponsored by the [American Psychological Foundation](#), Clark University, and APA.

“In exploring collaboration of the two institutions so important to me, I saw a way to repay a massive debt—the debts I owed to education in general and Clark in particular, to the profession, and to the many wonderful teachers who have contributed so much to my life,” said Dr. Gurel.

The American Psychological Association, in Washington, DC, is the largest scientific and professional organization representing psychology in the United States and is the world’s largest association of psychologists. Through its divisions in 54 subfields of psychology and affiliations with 60 state, territorial and Canadian provincial associations, APA works to advance the creation, communication and application of psychological knowledge to benefit society and improve people’s lives.

Related link: <http://on.apa.org/1sH6a5i>



# 2014 INTEL INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING FAIR WINNERS



Top row (left to right): Petra Grutzik, Colter Norick, Colin Norick, Timothy Renier; bottom row (left to right): Michelle Marquez, Leighton Braunstein, Chloe Sherry, Ashley Hamlin, Maha Khalid (APA)

The Intel International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF) was held May 11-16, 2014, at the Los Angeles Convention Center in Los Angeles, CA. More than 1,400 students from about 70 countries, regions and territories competed at the 65th Intel ISEF. To participate in the Intel ISEF competition, the finalists first competed against fellow students at 446 regional Intel ISEF affiliated science fairs around the world. Each affiliated fair selected two individual projects and one team project to travel to the Intel ISEF to compete in 17 different categories: animal sciences; behavioral and social sciences; biochemistry; cellular and molecular biology; chemistry; computer science; earth science; engineering — electrical and mechanical; engineering — materials and bioengineering; energy and transportation; environmental management; environmental science; mathematical sciences; medicine and health; microbiology; physics and astronomy; and plant sciences.

As a Special Awards Organization, APA grants seven awards to the best projects representing psychological science. During two days of intense judging, a panel of psychologists selected the top projects. The effort is funded and organized through the Education Directorate.

Other Special Awards Organizations members, such as the National Institute on Drug Abuse, National Institutes of Health; the Friends of NIDA; and Psi Chi, The International Honor Society in Psychology joined APA in granting awards to projects focused on psychology and the behavioral social sciences. Intel also awarded 16 grand awards and one best of category award for behavioral and social sciences projects.

The following awards were given by APA. All winners received an award certificate and a one-year student affiliate membership to APA.

<b>FIRST PLACE AWARD OF \$1,500</b>	Leighton Braunstein, 17, The Dalton School, NY “Adolescent Loss of Lis1 Results in Defective Hippocampal Morphology and Distinct Behavioral Deficits Resembling a Schizophrenic-Like Phenotype”
<b>SECOND PLACE AWARD OF \$1,000</b>	Timothy James Fossum Renier, 16, Duluth East High School, Duluth, MN “Hand Hygiene Gone Viral? A Study of Student Involvement in a Social Media Campaign as a Method of Bringing Hand Hygiene to the Masses”
<b>THIRD PLACE AWARDS OF \$500</b>	<div>Petra Luna Grutzik, 18, Redondo Union High School, Redondo Beach, CA “Linking Expression and Function of FoxP2 in Adult Songbirds Using Operant Preference Testing”</div> <div>Ashley Maye Hamlin, 16, Hilton Head Island High School, Hilton Head Island, SC “Light Speed: A Measure of Ocular Phototransduction Using Pulsed Light Emitting Diodes”</div> <div>Michelle Maria Marquez, 14, Math and Science High School at Clover Hill, Midlothian, VA “The Paradox of Emotional Dimensionality: The Effect of the Dimensionality of Audio Stimuli on the Brain’s Electrical Activity, a Neuroscience Study”</div> <div>Colin Norick, 15, Colter Norick, 16, Columbia Falls High School, Columbia Falls, MT “The Correlation Between Docosahexaenoic Acid (DHA) and Cognitive Function in Healthy Teens”</div> <div>Chloe Sherry, 17, John Adams High School, South Bend, IN “A Study of the Effects of Transplantation of Tissue From Planarian Flatworks Conditioned With Light-Shock Therapy Into Naïve Planarian Flatworms”</div>